

I CLAIM:

1. A method of securely transmitting light information in a network along a path comprised of a plurality of untrusted network devices, said untrusted network devices comprising a plurality of switching devices, and said method comprising:
- 5 sending at least one setup message to one of said network devices;
- based on said setup message, configuring at least one of said network devices to direct said light along said path to a terminal endpoint using at least one of said switching devices, whereby a configured path is established;
- 10 sending a plurality of pulses of said light along said configured path, said pulses having a first set of randomly selected quantum bases; and
- measuring a quantum state of said light pulses using a second set of randomly selected quantum bases, thereby providing a measured quantum state.
2. A method according to claim 1, wherein said plurality of switching devices further comprises a plurality of optical switching devices.
3. A method according to claim 1, wherein said configured path is multiplexed onto a single fiber with at least one other quantum-cryptographic signal.
4. A method according to claim 3, wherein said configured path is multiplexed using wavelength division multiplexing.

5. A method according to claim 3, wherein said configured path is multiplexed using time division multiplexing.
6. A method according to claim 1, wherein said setup message is sent using the CR-LDP protocol.
7. A method according to claim 1, wherein said setup message is sent using the RSVP protocol.
8. A method according to claim 1, wherein said setup message is sent via a data network using TCP/IP datagrams.
9. A method according to claim 1, wherein said setup message is sent via an asynchronous-transfer-mode network.
10. A method according to claim 1, wherein said optical switching device comprises a micro-electro-mechanical system mirror array.
11. A method according to claim 1, wherein said optical switching device comprises photonic-band-gap material.
12. A method according to claim 1, wherein said optical switching device comprises a mirror.

13. A method according to claim 1, wherein said light pulse in said plurality of light pulses comprises a single polarized photon.

14. A method according to claim 1, further comprising:

establishing at least one sending quantum basis corresponding to said first set of randomly selected quantum bases;

establishing a corresponding receiving quantum basis corresponding to said second set of
5 randomly selected quantum bases;

determining whether said sending quantum basis has an equivalent orientation to said corresponding receiving quantum basis;

discarding any improperly oriented said light pulses for which said sending quantum basis was determined to be different from said receiving quantum basis, whereby a first
10 remaining stream of said light pulses remains;

comparing said measured quantum state of a random subset of said first remaining stream of light pulses as sent, to said first remaining stream of light pulses as received, to produce a set of variant light pulses having a quantity;

establishing a predetermined threshold against which to compare said quantity;
15 determining whether said quantity exceeds said predetermined threshold;

discarding said random subset of said first remaining stream of light pulses, whereby a second remaining stream of light pulses remains; and

if said predetermined threshold is not exceeded, using said second remaining stream of light pulses as a key to encrypt and decrypt data.

20

15. A method according to claim 14, wherein said sending and receiving quantum bases are polarization bases chosen from a group of polarization bases consisting of:

- a diagonal polarization basis; and
- a rectilinear polarization basis.

16. A method according to claim 14, wherein said sending and receiving quantum bases are phase-shift bases chosen from a group of phase-shift bases consisting of:

- a 45 degree phase-shift basis; and
- a 90 degree phase-shift basis.

17. A computer-readable medium containing instructions capable of causing at least one digital computer to securely transmit light information in a network along a path comprised of a plurality of untrusted network devices, said untrusted networking devices comprising a plurality of switching devices, said computer-readable medium comprising:

- 5 program code for sending at least one setup message to one of said network devices;
- program code for configuring at least one of said network devices to direct said light along said path to a terminal endpoint using at least one of said switching devices based on said setup message, whereby a configured path is established;
- program code for sending a plurality of bits using pulses of said light along said
- 10 configured path, said pulses having a first set of randomly selected quantum bases; and
- program code for measuring a quantum state of said light pulses using a second set of randomly selected quantum bases.

18. A method according to claim 17, wherein said plurality of switching devices further comprises a plurality of optical switching devices.

19. A system in which light information is securely transmitted in a network along a
5 path comprised of a plurality of untrusted network devices, said plurality of untrusted network devices comprising a plurality of switching devices, said system comprising:

an electrical controller for controlling at least one of said switching devices, wherein said electrical controller is configured to receive at least one setup message from which said controller determines how to control said at least one of said switching devices;

10 wherein said at least one of said switching devices is configured to be oriented into at least two positions;

wherein said electrical controller orients said plurality of switching devices to direct optical energy along said path;

15 a light sending apparatus configured to send quantum-cryptographic light pulses along said path; and

a light measuring apparatus configured to observe said quantum-cryptographic light pulses.

20. A method according to claim 19, wherein said plurality of switching devices further comprises a plurality of optical switching devices.

21. A system according to claim 19, wherein said optical switching device comprises a micro-electro-mechanical system mirror array.

22. A system according to claim 19, wherein said optical switching device comprises photonic-band-gap material.

23. A system according to claim 19, wherein said optical switching device comprises a mirror.

24. A system according to claim 19, further comprising a multiplexer configured to multiplex said configured path onto a single fiber with at least one of said quantum-cryptographic signal.

25. A system according to claim 24, wherein said multiplexer employs dense wavelength division multiplexing.

26. A system according to claim 24, wherein said multiplexer employs time division multiplexing.

27. A system according to claim 19, wherein said setup message is sent using a CR-LDP protocol.

28. A system according to claim 19, wherein said setup message is sent using an RSVP protocol.

29. A system according to claim 19, wherein said setup message is sent via a data network using TCP/IP datagrams.

30. A system according to claim 19, wherein said setup message is sent via an asynchronous-transfer-mode network.

31. A system according to claim 19, wherein said optical switching device comprises a micro-electro-mechanical system device.

32. A system according to claim 19, wherein each pulse in said quantum-cryptographic light pulses comprises a single polarized photon.

33. Apparatus operational with light and with a polarized light pulse originating from an upstream source and terminating with a downstream destination, said apparatus comprising:

means for controlling at least one means for directing said light, wherein said controlling means is configured to receive at least one configuration message for configuring said directing

5 means;

means for orienting said directing means into at least two orientations;

said controlling means including means for causing said orienting means to orient the directing means into an orientation configured to direct said polarized light pulse from said

upstream source to said downstream destination, forming a path from an origin endpoint to a
10 terminal endpoint;

means for sending polarized-light from said origin endpoint, said sending means
configured to send quantum-cryptographic light pulses along said path; and

means for measuring said polarized-light at said terminal endpoint, said measuring means
configured to observe said quantum-cryptographic light pulses.

11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100 101 102 103 104 105 106 107 108 109 110 111 112 113 114 115 116 117 118 119 120 121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130 131 132 133 134 135 136 137 138 139 140 141 142 143 144 145 146 147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165 166 167 168 169 170 171 172 173 174 175 176 177 178 179 180 181 182 183 184 185 186 187 188 189 190 191 192 193 194 195 196 197 198 199 200 201 202 203 204 205 206 207 208 209 210 211 212 213 214 215 216 217 218 219 220 221 222 223 224 225 226 227 228 229 230 231 232 233 234 235 236 237 238 239 240 241 242 243 244 245 246 247 248 249 250 251 252 253 254 255 256 257 258 259 260 261 262 263 264 265 266 267 268 269 270 271 272 273 274 275 276 277 278 279 280 281 282 283 284 285 286 287 288 289 290 291 292 293 294 295 296 297 298 299 300 301 302 303 304 305 306 307 308 309 310 311 312 313 314 315 316 317 318 319 320 321 322 323 324 325 326 327 328 329 330 331 332 333 334 335 336 337 338 339 340 341 342 343 344 345 346 347 348 349 350 351 352 353 354 355 356 357 358 359 360 361 362 363 364 365 366 367 368 369 370 371 372 373 374 375 376 377 378 379 380 381 382 383 384 385 386 387 388 389 390 391 392 393 394 395 396 397 398 399 400 401 402 403 404 405 406 407 408 409 410 411 412 413 414 415 416 417 418 419 420 421 422 423 424 425 426 427 428 429 430 431 432 433 434 435 436 437 438 439 440 441 442 443 444 445 446 447 448 449 450 451 452 453 454 455 456 457 458 459 460 461 462 463 464 465 466 467 468 469 470 471 472 473 474 475 476 477 478 479 480 481 482 483 484 485 486 487 488 489 490 491 492 493 494 495 496 497 498 499 500 501 502 503 504 505 506 507 508 509 510 511 512 513 514 515 516 517 518 519 520 521 522 523 524 525 526 527 528 529 530 531 532 533 534 535 536 537 538 539 540 541 542 543 544 545 546 547 548 549 550 551 552 553 554 555 556 557 558 559 560 561 562 563 564 565 566 567 568 569 570 571 572 573 574 575 576 577 578 579 580 581 582 583 584 585 586 587 588 589 590 591 592 593 594 595 596 597 598 599 600 601 602 603 604 605 606 607 608 609 610 611 612 613 614 615 616 617 618 619 620 621 622 623 624 625 626 627 628 629 630 631 632 633 634 635 636 637 638 639 640 641 642 643 644 645 646 647 648 649 650 651 652 653 654 655 656 657 658 659 660 661 662 663 664 665 666 667 668 669 670 671 672 673 674 675 676 677 678 679 680 681 682 683 684 685 686 687 688 689 690 691 692 693 694 695 696 697 698 699 700 701 702 703 704 705 706 707 708 709 710 711 712 713 714 715 716 717 718 719 720 721 722 723 724 725 726 727 728 729 730 731 732 733 734 735 736 737 738 739 740 741 742 743 744 745 746 747 748 749 750 751 752 753 754 755 756 757 758 759 760 761 762 763 764 765 766 767 768 769 770 771 772 773 774 775 776 777 778 779 780 781 782 783 784 785 786 787 788 789 790 791 792 793 794 795 796 797 798 799 800 801 802 803 804 805 806 807 808 809 810 811 812 813 814 815 816 817 818 819 820 821 822 823 824 825 826 827 828 829 830 831 832 833 834 835 836 837 838 839 840 841 842 843 844 845 846 847 848 849 850 851 852 853 854 855 856 857 858 859 860 861 862 863 864 865 866 867 868 869 870 871 872 873 874 875 876 877 878 879 880 881 882 883 884 885 886 887 888 889 890 891 892 893 894 895 896 897 898 899 900 901 902 903 904 905 906 907 908 909 910 911 912 913 914 915 916 917 918 919 920 921 922 923 924 925 926 927 928 929 930 931 932 933 934 935 936 937 938 939 940 941 942 943 944 945 946 947 948 949 950 951 952 953 954 955 956 957 958 959 960 961 962 963 964 965 966 967 968 969 970 971 972 973 974 975 976 977 978 979 980 981 982 983 984 985 986 987 988 989 990 991 992 993 994 995 996 997 998 999 1000